

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Colleagues:

We write today to express our concern with the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) funding provided for Amtrak, including for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), by the House Committee on Appropriations on July 18, 2023.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) authorizes multi-year funding for Amtrak's major capital projects and state-of-good repair work, such as replacing their aging fleet, rebuilding bridges and tunnels along the NEC, and investing in station and route improvements to the National Network. Through the IIJA, authorized funding was nearly doubled for the National Network (from \$1.2 billion in FY21 to \$2.3 billion in FY22) and increased for the NEC from \$600 million in FY21 to \$1.57 billion in FY22.

In addition to providing advance appropriations for specific categories of capital investments, the IIJA also authorized considerable funding for long needed programs to improve passenger rail service and expand it to regions underserved by Amtrak today, such as the Corridor Identification and Development Program, which has already spurred efforts to bring and expand passenger rail services to communities in Northeast Ohio, New England, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Kansas, and many other places around the nation. Accordingly, in FY23, our colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee robustly funded those programs, which has enabled critical investments in our national rail infrastructure. As Congress intended, Amtrak has used these funds to increase speeds and reduce trip times on the NEC, make much needed repairs and improvements to stations across its network, enhance long distance services that are critical to rural communities, and invest in Wi-Fi and other customer-facing projects.

Unfortunately, the House Appropriations Committee has proposed slashing Amtrak's annual appropriation by 64% from FY23 enacted levels. This devastating cut to our national passenger rail service would undermine the IIJA's affirmation that intercity rail is an essential part of

American transportation. The proposed budget cuts to Amtrak are shortsighted, and cannot be ameliorated by advance appropriations from the IIJA: those funds are limited to specific categories of capital investments. Underfunding Amtrak's annual appropriations will undermine necessary state-of-good repair work, inhibit progress on other capital projects, and runs counter to the interests of millions of our constituents who rely on efficient and reliable rail services. Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner has already stated that "if the proposed levels become law, Amtrak will have to radically reduce or suspend service on various routes across the nation." This means fewer trains, longer delays, and increased travel costs for hardworking Americans who depend on Amtrak for intercity and regional train travel for commuting, work, or leisure.

To that end, it is also concerning that the Committee has proposed eliminating funding for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program. This program provides funding to states for the development and improvement of intercity passenger rail services across the country. Eliminating funding for this critical program would negatively impact jobs related to rail construction, manufacturing, and the supply chain in addition to harming local and national businesses that rely on major rail corridors, such as the NEC, and other intercity passenger rail routes. Because there is greater demand for rail funding in the Northeast - in addition to growing demand nationwide - it is crucial that funding for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program not be eliminated.

Strong intercity passenger rail services also offer options to our nation's intercity travel network; several episodes during the last year that grounded thousands of planes across the country highlight the need for more alternatives to air travel. The proposed 92% cuts to the NEC funding are particularly alarming. The NEC is Amtrak's most heavily utilized route, serving as a crucial transportation artery connecting major cities in the densely populated Northeast. Slashing funding from \$1.3 billion to \$99 million would interrupt service, bring a halt to essential infrastructure repairs and equipment overhauls required to keep trains running, and cause an immense strain on the millions of commuters, leisure travelers, and businesspeople who rely on this corridor daily.

Amtrak has and will continue to play a critical role in shaping the future of American transportation by spurring capital development, enabling regional connectivity, connecting workers to employers, and improving regional tax revenue. To that end, we encourage you to provide robust funding for Amtrak and its passenger rail services in the final Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



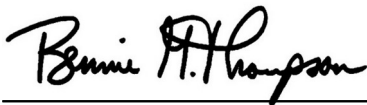
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Patrick K. Ryan
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Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



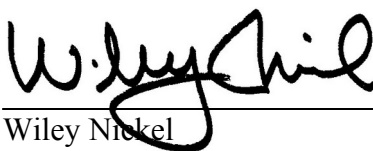
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



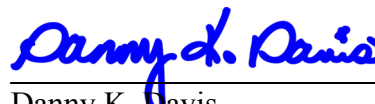
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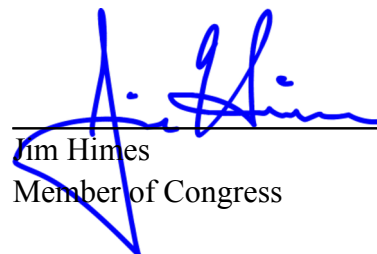
Ann McLane Kuster
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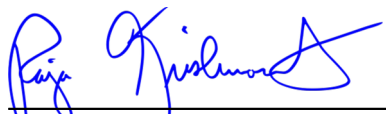
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Dwight Evans

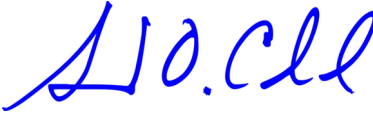
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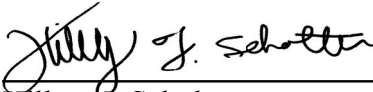
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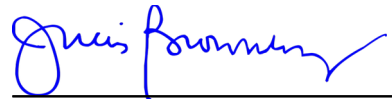
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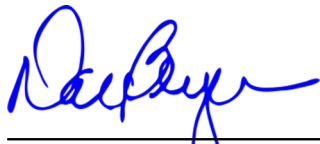
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Chrissy Houlahan
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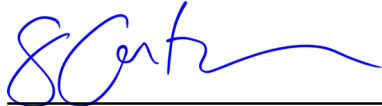
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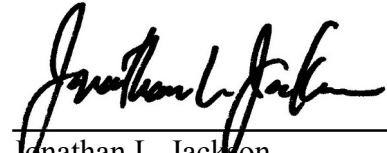
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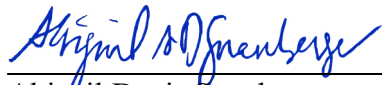
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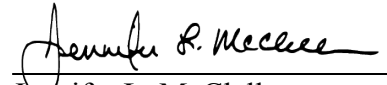
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Tony Cárdenas
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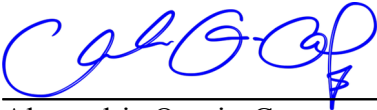
Andy Kim
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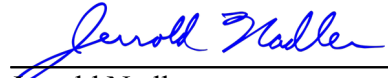
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Jim Costa
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



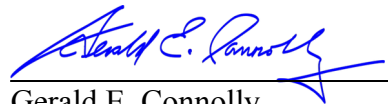
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



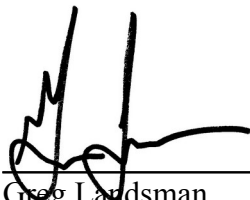
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